

What is claimed is:

1. An image forming device comprising:

an upstream-side sheet transport pathway;

a plurality of downstream-side sheet transport

5 pathways that diverge from the upstream-side sheet transport pathway at a divergence point; and

a pathway switching mechanism that, at the divergence point, selectively guides sheets transported following the

upstream-side sheet transport pathway to one of the

10 plurality of downstream-side sheet transport pathways, the pathway switching mechanism including a pair of upstream-side gate members and a gate member pivoting unit, the pair of upstream-side gate members including a pair of pivot

shafts and a pair of gates, the pair of pivot shafts being

15 disposed with the sheet transport pathway interposed therebetween, each of the pair of gates being pivotable around a corresponding one of the pair of pivot shafts and

extending substantially toward the downstream-side sheet

transport pathways, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting

20 the pair of gates substantially simultaneously and substantially in the same direction.

2. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gate member pivoting unit includes:

a drive unit that supplies drive force for driving at

25 least one of the pair of upstream-side gate members to pivot

selectively in a forward direction and a reverse direction;  
a drive transmission mechanism that transmits the drive force from the drive unit to the at least one of the pair of upstream-side gate members; and

5 a ganging mechanism that gangs pivoting movement of the at least one of the pair of upstream-side gate members with the other of the pair of upstream-side gate members.

3. The image forming device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the pathway switching mechanism further includes a 10 downstream-side gate member, the downstream-side gate member having a downstream-side pivot shaft and a downstream-side gate, the downstream-side pivot shaft being positioned directly upstream from the plurality of downstream-side sheet transport pathways and downstream from the divergence point, the downstream-side gate being pivotable around the downstream-side pivot shaft and extending substantially toward the upstream-side sheet transport pathway, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting the downstream-side gate and the pair of upstream-side gates in the same direction.

20 4. The image forming device as claimed in claim 3, wherein the drive transmission mechanism includes a first drive transmission mechanism that transits drive force from the drive unit to the downstream-side gate and pivots the downstream-side gate in a selected one of opposite 25 directions.

5. The image forming device as claimed in claim 4,  
wherein the drive transmission unit further includes a  
second drive transmission mechanism that connects the  
downstream-side gate to one of the pair of upstream-side  
5 gate members to transmit pivoting movement of the  
downstream-side gate to the one of the pair of upstream-side  
gate members.

6. The image forming device as claimed in claim 5,  
further comprising:

10 a main casing; and  
a plurality of sheet guides that are attached to the  
main casing and that are disposed in opposition with each  
other with the upstream-side sheet transport pathway defined  
therebetween, at least one of the plurality of sheet guides  
15 being at least one of attachable/detachable and  
openable/closable with respect to the main casing and at  
least partially defining the upstream-side sheet transport  
pathway, one gate member of the pair of upstream-side gate  
members being assembled to the at least one of the plurality  
20 of sheet guides that is at least one of  
attachable/detachable and openable/closable;

wherein the ganging mechanism includes:

25 an urging member that is interposed between the at  
least one of the plurality of sheet guides and another of  
the pair of upstream-side gate members and that urges the

other of the pair of upstream-side gate members toward the one of the pair of upstream-side gate members; and

an abutment member for maintaining a gap between the pair of upstream-side gate members, the abutment member being fixed to the one of the upstream-side gates at a position that is between the pair of upstream-side gate members and that is separated from a surface of the one of the upstream-side gates along which sheets are transported.

7. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1,  
10 further comprising:

a main casing; and

a plurality of sheet guides that are attached to the main casing and that are disposed in opposition with each other with the upstream-side sheet transport pathway defined therebetween, at least one of the plurality of sheet guides being at least one of attachable/detachable and openable/closable with respect to the main casing and at least partially defining the upstream-side sheet transport pathway, one gate member of the pair of upstream-side gate members being assembled to the at least one of the plurality of sheet guides that is at least one of attachable/detachable and openable/closable.

8. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1,  
wherein the pathway switching mechanism further includes a  
25 downstream-side gate member, the downstream-side gate member

having a downstream-side pivot shaft and a downstream-side gate, the downstream-side pivot shaft being positioned directly upstream from the plurality of downstream-side sheet transport pathways and downstream from the divergence point, the downstream-side gate being pivotable around the downstream-side pivot shaft and extending substantially toward the upstream-side sheet transport pathway, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting the downstream-side gate and the pair of upstream-side gates in the same direction.

9. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

a main casing; and

a plurality of sheet guides that are attached to the main casing and that are disposed in opposition with each other with the upstream-side sheet transport pathway defined therebetween, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting the downstream gate only into at least a first pivot posture and a second pivot posture, a space sufficiently large for a sheet to pass through being opened between the downstream gate and one of the sheet guides while the downstream gate is in the first pivot posture and between the downstream gate and another of the sheet guides while the downstream gate is in the second pivot posture, the downstream gate being in a non-intersecting, non-abutting condition with the sheet guides in regardless of pivot posture.